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"THE LYING BIRD.

"What chatters there the little bird,
On the oak-tree above?
It sings, that every maid in love
Looks pale and wan from love.

"My little bird, thou speak'st not true,
A lie hast thou now said;
For see, I am a maid in love,
And am not pale, but red.

"Take care, my bird; because thou liest,
I now must punish thee;
I take this gun, I load this gun,
And shoot thee from the tree."

The influence of the neighbouring nations is less evident in the popular poetry of the Slovaks. The following song of a loving and longing girl is certainly quite original.

"MAN AND MOON.

"Ah! if but this evening
Would come my lover sweet,
With the bright, bright sun
Then the moon would meet!"

"Alas! poor girl, this evening
Comes not thy lover sweet;
And with the bright, bright sun
The moon doth never meet."

ART. V. — *Reminiscences of an Intercourse with Mr. Niebuhr the Historian, during a Residence with him in Rome, in the Years 1822 and 1823.* By FRANCIS LIEBER, Professor of History and Political Economy in South Carolina College. Philadelphia. Carey, Lea, & Blanchard. 1835. 12mo. pp. 192.

IN the last Number of this journal some account was given of the principal facts in Mr. Niebuhr's life, together with an extended analysis of his great work on Roman History. It may not be uninteresting to the readers of that article to have some notice of Mr. Lieber's *Reminiscences* of the opinions,

character, and appearance of so remarkable a man, laid before them.

The author of this little volume has been well known in the United States, during several years past, for the variety and extent of his attainments, and his indefatigable literary activity. His edition of the "Conversations-Lexicon," is a proud monument of learning, enterprise, and industry. His "Stranger in America" contains a great variety of information on the United States, communicated in a style of uncommon liveliness and piquancy; and his volume on education, submitted to the trustees of the legacy of the late Mr. Girard for a college in Philadelphia, shows a familiarity with the details of the science of instruction, which justifies the confidence that the governors of South Carolina College have lately reposed in him, in calling him to one of the most important chairs in that institution.

These "Reminiscences" are extremely interesting and instructive. They carry on their face marks of their entire fidelity; and being, as they are, records of the historian's opinions and feelings, expressed in the ease and familiarity of domestic life, they give us more insight into his real character, than could be obtained from many a volume of much higher pretensions. The value of such works does not consist wholly, or even mainly, in the importance of the opinions they record. A great man must be supposed to talk, in his moments of relaxation, about subjects which are not above the comprehension of small men; he probably says many things, which it would not severely task the intellect of a very ordinary personage to utter; and yet these subjects and these sayings, when connected with the daily life of an illustrious man, acquire an interest wholly aside from their intrinsic importance. When, during Dr. Johnson's Highland tour, the sooty blacksmith bounced out of bed for the accommodation of the sage and his trusty squire, the event was by no means an extraordinary one; yet, when it came to be related afterwards, first in English, and secondly in *Johnsonese*, it became almost as renowned in literary history as any event in the life of the great lexicographer himself. Indeed it is unreasonable to insist upon a great man's always playing the great man's part. A king cannot always wear his robes of state; he must have his hours of amusement, when he may chat with his friends, or ride a hobby-horse with his children. And a great author must be allowed

to talk sometimes as freely, as if he had never got into type. His sentences cannot always be rounded with rhetorical elegance and precision; his thoughts cannot always be thoroughly reasoned and oracularly delivered; and it is precisely these exhibitions of his mind, in this unbended state, which are most attractive. We know, from his elaborate works, the grasp and power of his intellect; the variety and depth of his learning; the purity, elegance, and eloquence of his style. But the minute shades of his intellectual character; the tenderness of his domestic feelings; his whims, prejudices, eccentricities, which all take delight in knowing, we can only know through the medium of correspondence and reminiscences like these before us.

But yet the familiar conversation of a great man will display at times his superiority over other men. The conversational talents of the late Sir James Mackintosh and Mr. Coleridge have acquired a well-merited and universal celebrity. Who has not heard of Dr. Johnson's eulogy on Burke, that no man could step under a shed with him of a rainy day, and not find out that he was the greatest man in England? The scholar's daily discourse will have a tincture of learning, the philosopher's conversation will take a speculative turn, and the poet will adorn his most careless talk with the graces of imagery and sentiment. Sometimes, indeed, the excitement of conversation between congenial spirits draws out flashes of wit, of poetry, of wisdom, and of eloquence, which surpass in beauty the graver and more sustained productions of the closet. If these could all be transferred glowing with the warmth of excited feeling, and fresh from the talker's lips, to the printed page, they would form a far more interesting chapter in the history of the human mind, than the cautiously weighed, coolly expressed convictions of private study. But as this can never be wholly done, and not often partially, we must be content with such scattered notices of eminent men as the memory of friends, and the letters of cotemporaries, can furnish. Even Boswell's admirable records of Dr. Johnson's conversation extend over a very small portion of that great man's life, and his work is incomparably the best, the most minute, and the liveliest book in that branch of literature.

But to return to our author. He had an excellent opportunity of becoming familiarly acquainted with the moral and intellectual character of the great historian. It appears from the

Introduction that Mr. Lieber, animated, in common with many of his young countrymen, by a lively enthusiasm in the cause of struggling Greece, had engaged in her service in 1821. Being disappointed in his hopes, and finding it impossible to remain, he was obliged to return in the following year. He accordingly took passage at Missolunghi, in a vessel bound to Ancona, having only one *scudo* and a half, after paying his passage. In this almost destitute condition, he was detained some time by quarantine regulations on the coast of Italy. Remembering that a friend of his had devoted himself to the fine arts, he immediately addressed a letter to him in Rome, which was attended to with the promptness and good feeling that are always found among fellow-students. Another difficulty was still to be surmounted; when he applied to the police-officer to sign his passport to Rome, he was informed that orders had been received that no passport of a person returning from Greece should be signed, except for a journey home. However, he got it signed for Orbitello, a town in Tuscany, in the neighbourhood of Rome. Having succeeded thus far, he, and a Philhellenic friend in pretty much the same condition with himself, hired a *vetturino*, and made the best of their way to the Eternal City, which they entered without license and without obstruction. Mr. Niebuhr was, at that time, the Prussian Minister at the Papal court; appointed by his liberal-minded monarch for the express purpose of giving him an opportunity to prosecute his historical researches with every advantage that a residence on the spot, and a high diplomatic station, would afford him. Mr. Lieber determined to apply at once to his learned countryman, and to disclose frankly his situation, justly thinking that the historian of Rome would not compel him to leave the city, until he had had time to study its antiquities as much as he wished. On his first call, he was unable to see the minister, but was treated with great kindness by the Secretary of Legation, and received, through his hands, the documents necessary to a residence in Rome, and funds to meet his immediate wants. The next day he renewed his call at the appointed hour, and received an invitation to dine with the Ambassador, the account of which, from its frankness and honesty, is at once amusing and touching.

“When I went the next morning at the appointed time, as I thought, Mr. Niebuhr met me on the stairs, being on the point

of going out. He received me with kindness and affability, returned with me to his room, made me relate my whole story, and appeared much pleased that I could give him some information respecting Greece, which seemed to be not void of interest to him. Our conversation lasted several hours, when he broke off, asking me to return to dinner. I hesitated in accepting the invitation, which he seemed unable to understand. He probably thought that a person in my situation ought to be glad to receive an invitation of this kind; and, in fact, any one might feel gratified in being asked to dine with him, especially in Rome. When I saw that my motive for declining so flattering an invitation was not understood, I said, throwing a glance at my dress, 'Really, Sir, I am not in a state to dine with an Excellency.' He stamped with his foot, and said with some animation, 'Are diplomatists always believed to be so cold-hearted! I am the same that I was in Berlin, when I delivered my lectures: your remark was wrong.*' No argument could be urged against such reasons.

"I recollect that dinner with delight. His conversation, abounding in rich and various knowledge and striking observations; his great kindness; the acquaintance I made with Mrs. Niebuhr; his lovely children, who were so beautiful, that when, at a later period, I used to walk with them, the women would exclaim, '*Ma guardate, guardate, che angeli!*' — a good dinner (which I had not enjoyed for a long time) in a high vaulted room, the ceiling of which was painted in the style of Italian palaces; a picture by the mild Francia close by; the sound of the murmuring fountain in the garden, and the refreshing beverages in coolers, which I had seen, but the day before, represented in some of the most masterly pictures of the Italian schools; in short, my consciousness of being at dinner with Niebuhr in his house in Rome, and all this in so bold relief to my late and not unfrequently disgusting sufferings, would have rendered the moment one of almost perfect enjoyment and happiness, had it not been for an annoyance, which, I have no doubt, will appear here a mere trifle. However, reality often widely differs from its description on paper. Objects of great effect for the moment become light as air, and others, shadows and vapors in reality, swell into matters of weighty consideration when subjected to the recording pen; — a truth, by the way, which applies to our daily life, as well as to transactions of powerful effect; — and it is, therefore, the sifting tact which constitutes one of the most necessary, yet difficult requisites for a sound historian.

* * *Das war Kleinlich*, were his words."

“ My dress consisted as yet of nothing better than a pair of unblackened shoes, such as are not unfrequently worn in the Levant; a pair of socks of coarse Greek wool; the brownish pantaloons frequently worn by sea-captains in the Mediterranean; and a blue frock-coat, through which two balls had passed, a fate to which the blue cloth cap had likewise been exposed. The socks were exceedingly short, hardly covering my ankles, and so indeed were the pantaloons; so that, when I was in a sitting position, they refused me the charity of meeting, with an obstinacy which reminded me of the irreconcilable temper of the two brothers in Schiller's ‘Bride of Messina.’ There happened to dine with Mr. Niebuhr another lady besides Mrs. Niebuhr; and my embarrassment was not small when, towards the conclusion of the dinner, the children rose and played about the ground, and I saw my poor extremities exposed to all the frank remarks of quick-sighted childhood; fearing as I did, at the same time, the still more trying moments after dinner, when I should be obliged to take coffee near the ladies, unprotected by the kindly shelter of the table. Mr. Niebuhr observed, perhaps, that something embarrassed me, and he redoubled, if possible, his kindness.

“ After dinner he proposed a walk, and asked the ladies to accompany us. I pitied them; but as a gentleman of their acquaintance had dropped in by this time, who gladly accepted the offer to walk with us, they were spared the mortification of taking my arm. Mr. Niebuhr, probably remembering what I had said of my own appearance in the morning, put his arm under mine, and thus walked with me for a long time. After our return, when I intended to take leave, he asked me whether I wished for any thing. I said I should like to borrow his ‘History.’ He had but one copy to which he had added notes, and which he did not wish, therefore, to lend out of his house; but he said he would get a copy for me. As to his other books, he gave me the key of his library to take whatever I liked. He laughed when I returned laden with books, and dismissed me in the kindest manner.” — pp. 27—31.

A few days after this incident, Mr. Lieber was invited to become an inmate in Mr. Niebuhr's house, and to undertake the instruction of his son, in which situation he remained, until Mr. Niebuhr returned to Prussia. After Mr. Lieber's separation from the family of the historian, he kept up a friendly correspondence with him until the time of Mr. Niebuhr's lamented death, in 1831. Large extracts from Niebuhr's letters are given in the remaining portion of the introduction,

which show their author's character in a most favorable point of view. A judgment acute, discriminating, and cool, blended with feelings of the heart as pure and simple as those of childhood itself, is apparent on every page of them. The following is Mr. Lieber's description of the personal appearance and some of the peculiarities of his friend.

"Mr. Niebuhr was small in stature, and thin; his voice, of a very high pitch. He could not see well at a distance, and made sometimes strange mistakes. Spectacles were indispensable to him; and I had once to make a day's journey in order to fetch his Dolland's which had been forgotten. He lived very frugally; wine and water was his usual beverage; he valued good wine, but did not drink it often. He frequently shaved while walking up and down the room; and, when I was present, he would even talk during this dangerous operation. He disliked smoking very much but took snuff to such an excess, that he had finally to give it up. He did not write, as the ancient scholar, a whole book with one pen; but he used a pen a very long time before he mended it, turning it all round so as to use always its sharp point. Yet he wrote a neat and legible hand.

"His rare memory enabled him to study frequently without a pen; and I found him sometimes in a lying posture on a sofa, holding the work of an ancient writer over his head. These were not works which he read by way of relaxation; but, not unfrequently, those he studied with the keenest attention. His memory, indeed, was almost inconceivable to others. He remembered almost every thing he had read at any period of his life. He was about twenty years old when he studied at Edinburgh, and I was present when he conversed at Rome with an English gentleman upon some statistical statement which he had read in the English papers at the time of his residence in that country. The statement was important to the stranger, a member of Parliament, if I remember right; and Mr. Niebuhr desired me to take pen and paper, and forthwith dictated to me a considerable column of numbers, to the great surprise of the English visitor. What an immense power such a man would have in a deliberative assembly, merely on account of his unrelaxing memory! He did not undervalue the great importance of this faculty, which, though it be but an instrument, is the most useful and indispensable of all instruments in all pursuits, disregarded by those only who have none. Nor is a retentive memory without its moral value both for individuals and nations; and there was truth in the remark of Goethe's friend in Strasburg, that a man with a bad memory was necessarily exposed to the vice of ingratitude.

“ Mr. Niebuhr and myself had conversed one day on the great power which a man with a tenacious memory often has over another not equally gifted, merely by an array of facts and dates, though the strength of the argument may be decidedly on the other side; and how necessary it therefore becomes to cultivate the memory. He said, ‘ Without a strong memory I never should have been able to write my History, for extracts and notes would not have been sufficient; they would again have formed an inaccessible mass, had I not possessed the index in my mind.’ ” — pp. 45–47.

The impression made upon the reader by the tone and spirit of this Introduction, is highly favorable to the personal characters of both the gentlemen who are concerned. The frank good nature, with which Mr. Niebuhr received the returning Phillhellene, is honorable to his heart, and shows that brilliant success in literature, and the distinctions of high political station, had left untouched all the natural goodness of his character; and the directness and honesty, with which the tale is told by Mr. Lieber, manifest a grateful sense of the generous conduct of his friend, and are a pleasing tribute to the memory of departed worth.

The *Reminiscences* extend over a great variety of subjects. Living, as the historian did, in the central scene where the great events of Roman history had taken place, and surrounded with the mouldering memorials of departed greatness, his conversation would naturally take a hue from such interesting associations. We find, therefore, in these records of his conversation, Mr. Niebuhr's opinions on questions of ancient history, on the history of language and philology in general, on politics, ancient and modern, on topics of high literary interest, and on the distinguished personages with whom his studies or his political relations had brought him acquainted. We recognise, in all these opinions, a vigorous and enlarged intellect, enriched with vast and truly German erudition, and animated by a kindly and philosophical spirit. Though his studies principally lay among the ancients, yet he was fond of illustrating his peculiar views by modern analogies; and his knowledge of modern history, and of the literature contained in the modern languages of Europe, furnished him with abundant resources, which he used in the happiest manner. The criticisms scattered over this volume are full of good sense and impartiality. The opinions on other subjects are generally sound and weighty;

and some of them exhibit an extraordinary depth and comprehensiveness of mind. There are some, to be sure, whose only value consists in the fact that they were the opinions of Mr. Niebuhr ; but we think Mr. Lieber quite right in inserting them. There are others, too, which show only some peculiar notion or whim of the historian ; and these have their value, according to the view we stated at the outset. They all go to furnish us with a lively idea of Mr. Niebuhr as a man. The style in which they are written, is generally very correct, idiomatic English. It is probable that the remarks lose some of their point, by the inevitable necessity, under which a translator labors, of varying the expression, and of varying familiar expressions more than any others. But notwithstanding this difficulty, Mr. Lieber has stated strongly and clearly the sentiments of the historian, and in a manner to excite the interest of the reader to a high degree.

The following opinion of the King of the Netherlands has an historical importance when taken in connexion with late political events. It shows both the good sense of the King, and the sagacity of Mr. Niebuhr.

“ I used to know the King of the Netherlands well, when he lived in great retirement in Berlin, after having been driven from Holland by the French. He took great interest in my History, and read and studied a good deal. He is a character of sterling worth : so is the Queen ; she is a woman of the purest character, mild and charitable. They are a couple wishing as anxiously the good of their people, as any that ever sat upon a throne. I believe there are very few women, in whatever rank of life, to be compared in excellence to the Queen of the Netherlands. The King asked my views respecting the union of Holland and Belgium,* and the constitution. You know he was averse to taking Belgium. I declared most positively that this would never do : if Belgium must be under the same sceptre with Holland, they ought at least to remain separated like Norway and Sweden. There is, in fact, much more reason for separation with the Dutch and Belgians. They have nothing in

“ * I think I am correct in this statement ; quite sure I am, that he said he had communicated his views such as stated above to the King, which he hardly would have done had he not been asked so to do. But I think he said distinctly, that the sketch of the constitution had been shown him. I believe, moreover, that he said the King was of his opinion as to separate governments for Holland and Belgium, but that he was outvoted by his counsellors. — The above remark was made in the year 1822.”

common ; language, religion, interests, every thing is directly opposed. The Belgians are poor copies of the French. I cannot believe that the present arrangement will end well ; I have very serious fears and misgivings. May God grant that my fears are unfounded, and my speculations will be put to nought !" — pp. 64, 65.

Many readers will agree with the opinion of Pope's Homer in the extract that follows. As translators, there is no comparison between Pope and Cowper, the latter of whom seems to have been unknown to Niebuhr. In fact, the English themselves have never done full justice to the merits of Cowper's version of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The melody of Pope's versification so captivates the ear, that Cowper, though immeasurably superior in all the important requisites of a translator, can scarcely gain a hearing.

"What wisdom there is in Homer ! With a few omissions it is the very book for children. I know of no story, except Robinson Crusoe, which fascinates a child so much as Homer. It is all natural, simple, and capable of being understood by a child. And then, how well does he prepare for all the knowledge of antiquity, without which we cannot now get along ! How many thousand things and sayings does the child understand at once by knowing that great poem ! The whole *Odyssey* is the finest story for a child.

"Have you ever read Pope's *Odyssey* ? [I answered in the negative.]

"Well, he replied, you must read some parts of it at least ; it is a ridiculous thing, as bad as the French heroes of Greece in periwigs. There is not a breath of antiquity in Pope's translation. He might have changed as much as he liked, and called it a reproduction ; but to strip it of its spirit of antiquity, was giving us a corpse instead of a living being. It is a small thing. How totally different is the manner in which the German Voss has handled the subject. He shows at once that he knows and feels the poem is antique, and he means to leave it so. Voss's translation might certainly be improved in various parts, but he has made Homer a German work, now read by every one ; he has done a great thing. You do not imagine it, yet it is a fact, that Voss's translation of Homer has had a great influence upon your own education. I say it, well considering what I say, that the influence of the labors of Voss on the whole German nation will be so great that other nations will feel and acknowledge it." — pp. 67, 68.

Mr. Niebuhr's remarks on handwriting are applicable to other manuscripts, as well as letters.

"A bad handwriting ought never to be forgiven; * it is a shameful indolence; indeed, sending a badly written letter to a fellow creature is as impudent an act as I know of. Can there be any thing more unpleasant, than to open a letter which at once shows that it will require long deciphering? Besides, the effect of the letter is gone, if we must spell it. Strange, we carefully avoid troubling other people even with trifles, or to appear before them in a dress which shows negligence or carelessness, and yet nothing is thought of giving the disagreeable trouble of reading a badly written letter. In England, good breeding requires writing well and legibly; with us (the Germans) it seems as if the contrary principle was acknowledged. † Although many people may not have made a brilliant career by their fine handwriting, yet I know that not a few have spoiled theirs by a bad one. The most important petitions are frequently read with no favorable disposition, or entirely thrown aside, merely because they are written so badly." — pp. 74 – 76.

A few more extracts, taken almost at random, must conclude our notice of this book. We cannot, however, take leave of its entertaining and instructive pages, without thanking

"* Mr. Niebuhr wrote a peculiarly legible and fair hand; an accomplishment of which not many German *savans* can boast."

"† Writing seems to me to be just like dressing; we ought to dress well and neat; but as we may dress too well, so may a pedantically fine hand show that the writer has thought more of the letters than the sense. It ought to be remembered, however, that it is far more difficult to write German characters well and legibly than Roman letters. Hence names in German manuscripts for printers are generally written with the latter. The English write best of all nations, using this alphabet; the Americans next. The French write in general badly, especially ladies; the Italians very poorly; and Spaniards hardly legibly, to the great confusion of their foreign commercial correspondents. It is curious to observe how the two last-named nations show by their handwriting that they have remained behind the general European civilization. They continue to use the contracted letters, abbreviations, and ornamental lines and flourishes, which were common with all Europeans a century ago. The art of writing has much improved during the latter centuries; compare manuscript letters of the present day with those we have of the time of the Reformation. Nor does the progress of this art show less the general tendency of the times, than so many other branches of human activity, domestic comfort, &c. While the ancient expensive art of writing most beautifully and tastefully on parchment has fallen into disuse, the common handwriting of every man, for daily practical use, has vastly improved; the one, expensive, and of an exclusive character, belonged to an aristocratic age; the other is characteristic of a time of popular tendency."

Mr. Lieber for this valuable and interesting contribution to our means of knowing, familiarly, one of the greatest and most philosophical scholars, that modern times have produced.

How just are the following remarks, suggested by the death of Canova.

“There is one good man less! Canova was an excellent man, liberal in a rare degree, kind, without envy or jealousy, faithful, pious, and of a reflecting mind withal. He felt a true attachment to Pius the Seventh, which was probably increased by the misfortunes of the Pope and his dignified demeanor in affliction. Canova would speak of him with a warmth which was truly edifying. I like his idea of making a picture for the church of the little village of his birth. Don't you believe that such a work will of itself give certain moral *élans* to the whole little Possagno? It will raise the *morale* of the village; it establishes a visible connexion between the people of that obscure place and a gifted and successful man, which is leaving a great legacy. So are public statues of great moral value; they excite, remind, teach. How very superficial are those who think they are but proofs of overwrought gratitude or flattery! To be sure they have been abused; what has not? Canova was ever ready to assist and guide young artists; and his idea of establishing prizes for the most successful among them was excellent.” — p. 128.

There is much truth in the following reflections.

“There were times, Mr. Niebuhr said, when people would have considered it almost like a degradation of the ancients, had a philologist attempted to explain their history or language by corresponding relations or phenomena of our own. The classical literature was superior to any thing modern nations had at the time of the revival of the sciences; they therefore received every thing coming from the ancients with a reverence, which would not allow a doubt of any thing, and required no reconciliation of any contradictory statements in them. But you will observe, that, wherever a practical man, a statesman for instance, occupied himself with the classics, how differently he treated them from the schoolmaster. The latter treated the classics as if they were something entirely beyond the sphere of reality; and this, indeed, is still the case with many. On the other hand, there is such a thing as flippant, impertinent familiarity, and such has not been very rare with the modern French before the Revolution. Its only object is to divert, from the contrast produced by a sudden comparison between the

most remote objects and those of our daily and common life. This is merely to amuse, and can amuse the little-minded only. Sometimes, indeed, it may be witty; but that is a different thing." — pp. 137, 138.

Mr. Niebuhr's opinion on the pronunciation of Latin will be interesting to classical scholars. Many will probably dissent from his view of the comparative correctness of the Italian and Spanish modes of pronouncing it.

"[On my question, which of the different ways of pronouncing Latin he thought best, he said that he had adopted the Italian pronunciation. On my farther question, Why? he said;]

"I have a number of reasons; but in fact the counter question, Why should we not adopt the Italian pronunciation? would be a perfectly good answer. As to the pronunciation of the *c*, it is clear that the Romans did not pronounce it in the German way, *Tsitsero*; this is altogether an uncouth northern sound. To pronounce it like *Sisero*, (with hard *s*,) is equally wrong; no inscription or other trace induces us to believe that the Romans used *c* as equivalent to *s*. Besides, if we see that each nation pronounces Latin according to the pronunciation of the vernacular tongue, it is preposterous to maintain that one or the other is the correct pronunciation, except the pronunciation of the Italian itself. That the *g* was not pronounced hard as the German,* seems clear from the fact, that most nations pronounce it soft. On the whole, Latin reads much better in the Italian way; and I think many passages of the poets require this pronunciation to receive their full value. People ought to agree to adopt this pronunciation; for it is too ridiculous to find the same language pronounced differently in every country, and subjected to all the caprices of the various idioms. The Spaniards sometimes claim to be, by way of tradition, in possession of the true Roman pronunciation. It is equally preposterous, that they whose language is so much more mixed, and whose country was never more than a province, should have retained a better pronunciation than the people of the mother country! Italian is still, in a degree, a Latin dialect." — pp. 140, 141.

* The German *g* is pronounced like the English in *give*."